



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2013

No. 27

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Answer us, O God, when we call. Be gracious to us and hear our prayers. Look on our Nation with favor, for Your promises are sure. We thank You that so many of our Nation's founders put their trust in You. Make us worthy of this godly heritage.

Lord, don't be far from us during this challenging season of our national history. As we grapple with the challenges of another fiscal standoff, help us to reaffirm each day our conviction that we are indeed one Nation under Your sovereign authority.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 26, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a

Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COWAN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following leaders' remarks, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Senator Chuck Hagel to be Secretary of Defense.

At noon today there will be a cloture vote on the Hagel nomination, upon reconsideration. Following that vote, the Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow for our weekly caucus meetings.

HAGEL NOMINATION AND SEQUESTRATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I just indicated the Senate will vote today for a second time to move forward on the nomination of Senator Chuck Hagel, a Republican, serving as Secretary of Defense. Twelve days ago, the Republicans mounted a first-of-its-kind filibuster of Senator Hagel's confirmation. Senator Hagel is the first nominee for Secretary of Defense in the history of our country to have been filibustered. And what has the filibuster gained my Republican colleagues 12 days later? Nothing. Nothing has changed. Twelve days later Senator Hagel's exemplary record of service to his country remains untarnished.

I can still remember going to visit Senator Hagel in his office. I don't remember what we were to discuss, but it was something dealing with Senate business. As I walked into his office, I

saw a picture of two young men on a mechanized vehicle in Vietnam. I asked what that was, and his staff indicated those were the Hagel brothers and their time together serving in Vietnam. They had both been wounded—Senator Chuck Hagel more than once—and Chuck Hagel was also credited with saving his brother's life in Vietnam. And this is the person who is going to be our next Secretary of Defense.

I repeat: His record of service to his country is untarnished. And 12 days later President Obama's support for this qualified nominee is still strong. Twelve days later a majority of Senators still supports his confirmation.

Senate Republicans have delayed for the better part of 2 weeks for one reason: partisanship. At a time when our Nation faces threats abroad—and that is an understatement—the President's nominee for Secretary of Defense deserves a fair and constructive confirmation process. Politically motivated delays send a terrible signal to our allies around the world and they send a terrible signal to the tens of thousands of Americans serving in Afghanistan, other parts of the world, and those valiant people who are serving here in the United States. For the sake of national security, it is time to set aside this partisanship.

In 3 days, across-the-board cuts to the Defense Department are scheduled to take effect. The Pentagon needs a seasoned leader to implement these cuts. Democrats are working hard to avert the worst of these arbitrary cuts—cuts for which an overwhelming majority of Republicans in Congress voted. The so-called sequester was supported by 174 Republicans in the House of Representatives and 28 Republicans here in the Senate—60 percent and 75 percent of the two Republican bodies in this Congress.

We have a balanced proposal to replace those across-the-board cuts for this year with smart spending reductions, which must continue; measures

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S819